



AGENDA ITEM 10

DATE OF MEETING: September 20, 2007

ACTION:   X  

INFORMATION:           

## **Statewide Evaluation Framework**

### **I. Issue**

On January 26, 2006, the First 5 California Commission allocated \$23.5 million to support the Statewide Evaluation Framework (Framework) through June 30, 2009. The June 30, 2009 implementation date restricts First 5 California to contracts less than two years in duration to implement the remaining components of the Framework.

### **II. Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Commission extend the implementation date for contracts in the proposed Framework from June 30, 2009, to December 31, 2011.

### **III. Background**

**Mandates:** Section 130105 of the California Health and Safety Code states that First 5 California must support:

*Research and development of best practices and standards for all programs and services relating to early childhood development established pursuant to this act, and for the assessment and quality evaluation of those programs and services.*

Pursuant to statute, 80 percent of the revenues in the California Children and Families Trust Fund (CCRTF) are distributed directly to First 5 county commissions to support local programs. Since First 5 California's inception, one contractor, SRI International, conducted the statewide evaluation of county commission programs. That contract ended on February 28, 2007.

Also pursuant to statute, 20 percent of the CCRTF is distributed to First 5 California to support communications, research and evaluation, administration, and First 5 California specific programs. First 5 California uses individual contractors to perform the research and evaluation functions for First 5 California programs.

**Framework:** The evolution of First 5 research and evaluation needs prompted the creation of The Evaluation Workgroup (Workgroup). The Workgroup membership includes First 5 California, First 5 county commission and the First 5 Association of California representatives. This Workgroup created an evaluation Framework (Attachment I) to:

- Address the most frequently asked stakeholder questions
- Simplify and standardize data reporting
- Define clear roles and responsibilities
- Create an integrated research and evaluation system

The centerpiece of the Framework is a data system that contains:

1. County annual report data and evaluation information
2. First 5 California program data
3. External data (e.g., demographic, preschool)
4. Literature review information

First 5 California will use the information in the data system to:

1. Create First 5 California's Annual Report
2. Support counties through dissemination of best practices and developing strategies to leverage evaluations
3. Support First 5 California's policy direction

See Attachment II for a graphic representation.

**Implementation Issues:** On October 26, 2005, First 5 California released Request For Proposal CCFC 7001 to secure a contractor to implement the Framework. First 5 California received three proposals and announced its intent to award the contract to Westat on February 24, 2006. The incumbent statewide evaluation contractor, SRI International, protested the intent to award on March 2, 2006. On April 11, 2006, the Department of General Services (DGS) Hearing Officer ruled in favor of SRI International and their protest, and instructed First 5 California to void the original intent to award. On April 21, 2006, Westat notified First 5 California as to their intent to file a lawsuit in Sacramento County Superior Court challenging DGS' decision. The lawsuit Westat, Inc. v. Director of the California Department of General Services was filed July 7, 2006. The Superior Court upheld DGS' decision to void the intent to award on September 7, 2006.

Today, less than two years remain to implement the Framework through June 30, 2009.

#### IV. Discussion

**Multiple Contractors:** Originally, First 5 California staff sought to implement the Framework through a single contractor. First 5 California would like to change its approach by implementing the Framework through a series of contractors. First 5 California will coordinate the work of the following six contractors to implement the Framework:

1. Policy Contractor, responsible for developing a policy evaluation plan identifying evaluation questions to support First 5 California's policy direction.
2. Local Evaluation Contractor, responsible for identifying and disseminating First 5 program best practices, and proposing ways to leverage evaluation opportunities.

3. Individual Research Contractors, responsible for conducting evaluations to answer specific questions to support First 5 California's policy direction.
4. California State Library Contract, responsible for identifying state and national studies.
5. Information Technology Contractor (ITC), responsible for creating an integrated data system to house county annual report, First 5 California program, and external data. In addition, the system will house evaluation reports and relevant literature.
6. Annual Report Contractor (ARC), responsible for publishing the First 5 California Annual Report.

To date, First 5 California has contracted with:

- California State Library to identify studies and publish "Studies in the News".
- Institute for Social Research (ISR), our ARC, to publish the First 5 California Annual Report.

**Challenges:** The expenditure authority to implement the Framework ends June 30, 2009, allowing only for contracts less than two years in duration. This compressed timeframe does not allow research staff enough time to evaluate the work of a contractor before it is necessary to seek a new contractor. The acquisition of an information technology contractor to develop a data system is even more challenging. First 5 California must use a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to secure an information technology vendor, which will take at least six months. Assuming we are successful in securing the vendor by July 1, 2008, it is questionable whether a vendor could build the system in the remaining year. This would leave staff no time to evaluate the system and learn from our experience before we would need to release another RFP.

**Strategic Alignment:** Extending the implementation date from June 30, 2009, to December 31, 2011 will allow First 5 California to implement contracts to support the Framework for a longer period of time. The Framework and the extension support four of First 5 California's proposed strategic goals:

- #1 – Policy Development
- #2 – Invest in Program Development
- #4 – Enhance Research and Evaluation
- #5 – Strengthen Organizational Operations and Systems

## **V. Staff Recommendation**

### **A. Description of the Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Commission extend the date of the expenditure authority to December 31, 2011.

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B. Pros of the Staff Recommendation

- Improves workload consistently due to staggered contracts
- Allows an information technology contractor enough time to build a data system
- Allows staff to evaluate our experience with a contractor before we need to seek another contractor

C. Cons of the Staff Recommendation

- Funding authority of \$23.5 million may not adequately fund all Framework contractors for extended time period

D. Operational Impact

Fewer contract renewals will free staff to work on evaluations rather than contracting.

**VI. Alternative I**

A. Description of Alternative

Maintain the original expenditure authority through June 30, 2009.

B. Pros of the Alternative

- Funding authority of \$23.5 million is likely adequate to support contracts less than two years in duration

C. Cons of the Alternative

- Increases workload due to volume of contracts
- May not allow an information technology contractor enough time to build a data system
- Does not allow staff to evaluate our experience with a contractor before we need to seek another contractor

D. Operational Impact

The increase in contract renewals will require staff to work on contracts rather than evaluations.